

ANTIBODIES TO THE K12 PROTEIN

~~GENE PRODUCT OVER EXPRESSED IN CANCER CELLS~~

The present invention relates, in general, to a cancer-related protein and to a nucleic acid sequence encoding same. In particular, the invention relates to a protein over expressed in certain neoplastic cells, including breast and ovarian cancer cells, to its encoding sequence, and to diagnostic and treatment methodologies based on same.

BACKGROUND

Breast cancer represents the most frequent cause of early morbidity and mortality in women in North America (Harris et al, New Eng. J. Med. 327:319, 390 and 473 (1992)). It is generally believed that this malignancy arises from a multi step process involving mutations in a relatively small number of genes, perhaps 10 or less. These mutations result in significant changes in the growth and differentiation of breast tissue that allow it to grow independent of normal cellular controls, to metastasize, and to escape immune surveillance. The genetic heterogeneity of most breast cancers suggests that they arise by a variety of initiating events and that the characteristics of individual cancers are due to the collective pattern of genetic changes that accumulate (Harris et al, New Eng. J. Med. 327:319, 390 and 473 (1992)).